

PO BOX 1527 · ENNIS, MT 59729 · 406.682.3148 mrfinfo@3rivers.net · www.madisonriverfoundation.org

May 25, 2012

Mark Lere Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Habitat Protection Bureau PO Box 200701 Helena, MT 59620-0701

Dear Mark,

I have enclosed an application requesting a grant from the Future Fisheries Improvement Program for the next phase of the existing Madison River riparian fencing project on the Granger Ranch south of the town of Ennis.

This current project will extend the existing 20-year fencing project onto a section of state land and pastures the Granger Ranch has leased from the Longhorn Ranch. These pastures abut the original project site on the south. Extending the riparian fencing along the river on these newly leased pastures will allow the Foundation to exclude livestock from the Madison and the riparian area along the river from Varney Bridge north almost to Ennis, a distance of approximately seven miles.

Future Fisheries awarded the Foundation a grant for the first phase of this project. We now are requesting funding to extend the project an additional two miles.

Our consultant/manager on the project, Todd Graham of Ranch Advisory Partners, has drafted a new rotational grazing plan that incorporates the original project area as well as the new pastures north from Varney Bridge. We have increased the number of sub-pastures, thereby significantly reducing the time stock will spend in any one pasture. The ranch also has agreed to move the riparian fencing even further back from the river, sacrificing grazing land to achieve more and deeper protection of the riparian resources along the river.

We appreciate Future Fisheries previous support for this project. Response to the project from our Foundation volunteers, the public and anglers has been very positive. Todd Graham's monitoring reports for the first two years of the project have shown significant improvement of vegetation along the river, as well as greatly improved conditions in the pastures. Other ranchers along the river have expressed an interest in the project and we hope to demonstrate continued success as an encouragement to other

preserve · protect · enhance

landowners to undertake similar efforts to improve their pastures as well as the riparian corridor along the Madison.

The Foundation already has made a significant financial investment in this project and will fund it again this year as we prepare to install the seasonal fencing prior to the movement of stock into the river pastures. We already have purchased the additional fencing materials needed on the newly leased pastures and two miles of the Madison. We also have renewed our contract with Ranch Advisory Partners to manage the project, coordinate activities with the ranch, and provide season-long monitoring and an annual progress report.

Thank you again for your past support for this project and your consideration of our grant application.

Sincerely yours,

Richard Lessner, PhD Executive Director

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**Enclosures** 

### FUTURE FISHERIES IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM GRANT APPLICATION

(please fill in the highlighted areas)

I.	AP	PLICANT INFORMATION
	A.	Applicant Name: Madison River Foundation Inc.
	B.	Mailing Address: PO Box 1527
	_	City Family Chatas AAT 7:00 50700
	C.	City: Ennis State: MT Zip: 59729
		Telephone: 406-682-3148
	D.	Contact Person: Richard Lessner, Executive Director
		Address if different from Applicant:
		City: Zip:
		Oity State Zip.
		Telephone:
	_	Landowner and/or Lessee Name
	E.	(if other than Applicant): Jeff Laszlo
		Mailing Address: PO Box 691
		- Dokto-
		City: Ennis State: MT Zip: 59729
		Telephone: 406-579-3434
	22	
II.	PRO	OJECT INFORMATION*
	A.	Project Name: Granger Ranch Riparian Fencing Extension
		River, stream, or lake: Madison River
		Wadison (Well
		Location: Township T6S Range R1W Section
		County: Madison
	_	
	В.	Purpose of Project:
		To install seasonal fencing and other infrastructure to exclude livestock from the Madison River north of Varney Bridge, restore damaged riparian vegetation along river banks, and improve the
		fishery and water quality in the Madison River.

### C. Brief Project Description:

The Madison River Foundation and the owners of the Granger Ranch launched this 10-year project in 2010 with a grant from Future Fisheries to demonstrate the benefits of installing fences to exclude stock from the riparian areas along the Madison River, and from the river itself, to improve habitat for both the fishery and the raising of stock, and to improve the pasturage for the rancher. The Foundation and Granger Ranch now propose to extend the project onto an additional 2 miles of the Madison River.

The Granger Ranch is bounded by 3.5 miles of the east bank of the Madison River from just south of the town of Ennis upstream almost to the Eight Mile Ford Fishing Access Site. In 2010 and 2011 Foundation volunteers assisted ranch staff in erected, moving, maintaining and removing for storage seasonal electric fencing along the Madison. In 2011 Foundation volunteers donated 75 hours labor on the project. Project monitoring at the end of each of the project's first two seasons indicated substantial improvements in plant growth in the riparian areas along the Madison as well as improved pasturage (monitoring reports for 2010 and 2011 have been provided to Future Fisheries.)

In 2012 the Granger Ranch leased additional pastures immediately south of and abutting the original project site extending to Varney Bridge on the Longhorn Ranch. This allows extension of the seasonal electric fencing for another two miles of river frontage. A new rotational grazing plan has been developed to include these new pastures and incorporate them into the existing project. As a result of the revised grazing plan livestock will spend even less time in any one pasture, thereby further reducing impacts on the riparian areas near the river.

The Granger Ranch is one of the largest land owners adjacent to the river in the Madison Valley. These sections of the ranch, and the newly leased pastures, are grazed in the months May through October. Currently sections of the riparian corridor on the new pastures north of Varney Bridge do not meet desired conditions. Currently there is no fencing along this reach of the river. In the summer months cattle often enter the river, trampling and denuding banks, and severely browsing the riparian vegetation, and at times even crossing the river. This has led to considerable bank erosion, siltation and exposed banks. It also has led to conflicts between stock accessing the river and recreational users, particularly anglers.

The Madison River Foundation, a 501(c)(3) organization, has partnered with the owner of the ranch to undertake a two-phase project to install seasonal fencing to exclude stock from the river and restore the riparian vegetation and pasturage in the impacted areas.

The Foundation contracted in April, 2009 with Todd Graham of Ranch Advisory Partners LLC (Bozeman, MT), a consulting firm, to conduct a survey and assessment of the impacted area, as well as develop a fencing and rotational grazing plan. Fencing along this stretch of the river presents interesting challenges as the winter ice gorge on the Madison above Ennis Lake is destructive of permanent fencing. The assessment identified a rotational grazing plan and infrastructure improvements, and outlined a monitoring regime to enable implementation of management plan.

**Phase Two**: The second phase of the project to be implemented in summers of 2012 entails the purchase and installation of temporary electric fencing erected prior to livestock being moved into the newly leased pastures. The temporary fencing will be installed in the early summer of 2012 to exclude stock from entering the riparian zone along the Madison River north from Varney Bridge, including the Phase 1 project area north to Ennis. Pasture fencing will be installed during the 2012 season to facilitate the revised and expanded rotational grazing plan. The river and pasture fencing will be removed before the advance of winter ice gorge. This work will be conducted jointly by the rancher and trained volunteers from the Madison River Foundation.

The management plan includes monitoring of the project site through tracking stock movements, photo points, cover board photos, water sampling and citizen science. Foundation volunteers will assist ranch staff in erecting the electric fences, regularly monitoring the fencing during the grazing season, moving the fences to accommodate the rotational grazing plan, and removing and storing the fences at the end of the season.

The extension of the project north from the original project boundary means that almost the entire east bank of the Madison from Varney Bridge to the Town of Ennis will be protected against the impact of livestock grazing.

	D.	Length of stream or size of lake that will be treated:	2 miles
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E. Project Budget: \$6,280.00

Grant Request (Dollars): \$ \$5,000.00

Contribution by Applicant (Dollars): \$ \$2,000.00 In-kind \$ 1,200.00

(salaries of government employees are not considered as matching contributions)

Contribution from other Sources (Dollars): \$ \_\_\_\_\_ In-kind \$ \$1,200.00

(attach verification - See page 2 budget template)

Total Project Cost: \$ 7,176.00

- F. Attach itemized (line item) budget see template
- G. Attach specific project plans, detailed sketches, plan views, photographs, maps, evidence of landowner consent, evidence of public support, and/or other information necessary to evaluate the merits of the project. If project involves water leasing or water salvage complete <a href="supplemental-questionnaire">supplemental-questionnaire</a> (fwp.mt.gov/habitat/futurefisheries/supplement2.doc).
- H. Attach land management and maintenance plans that will ensure protection of the reclaimed area.

### III. PROJECT BENEFITS\*

A. What species of fish will benefit from this project?:

Brown, rainbow and cutthroat trout, whitefish, grayling.

B. How will the project protect or enhance wild fish habitat?:

Riparian vegetation has important benefits to total fish biomass by supplying invertebrates (terrestrial insects) that contribute about one half of the energy need to sustain trout populations. Poorly managed grazing that damages riparian vegetation has substantial effects on trout populations not only by degrading river habitat but also by reducing riparian vegetation that supplies a critical invertebrate food source (Saunders & Fausch, "A Field test of Effects of Livestock Grazing Regimes on Invertebrate Food Webs that Support Trout," Colorado State University, 2008.) Rapid increases in trout populations after cattle are fenced away from riparian zones indicate that grazing has strong negative effects.

The fishery of the Madison River will benefit through implementation of this project. The success of woody vegetation growth along the Madison River would largely be driven by movements of ice. Numerous young cottonwoods and willows were seen during this project. Their growth to tall stature largely depends upon the flowing ice that may or may not sheer their stems and protection from stock grazing. Additional woody vegetation is desired in the project area, as additional shade would provide cover for fish. Lacking growth of woody vegetation, the extra herbaceous growth provided through implementation of management plans set forth herein should provide additional shade for both water and fish, as well as habitat for aquatic and terrestrial insects. Stabilized banks and woody debris provide cover for juvenile fish.

C. Will the project improve fish populations and/or fishing? To what extent?:

Yes, the project will prevent conflicts between anglers and cattle. It also will improve fish habitat by restoring damaged riparian areas to the benefit of trout populations (see study referenced above). Fencing and more sophisticated grazing management will directly benefit river fish.

D. Will the project increase public fishing opportunity for wild fish and, if so, how?:

Yes, since the improvement of streamside riparian habitat will increase areas of refuge for young fish, as well as improve terrestrial food sources for adult fish, a critical source of protein for trout during summer months as shown in several recent studies (for example, Kawaguchi et. al, "Terrestrial invertebrate inputs determine the local abundance of stream fishes," Ecology 84:701-708.

E. \_If the project requires maintenance, what is your time commitment to this project?:

Utilizing member volunteers, the Foundation will undertake to maintain the temporary seasonal fencing in partnership with the rancher, help install the fencing in spring, move it as needed during the grazing season to accommodate stock rotation, and remove it prior to the onset of the winter ice gorge.

What was the cause of habitat degradation in the area of this project and how will the project F. correct the cause?:

Cattle have severely browsed the riparian vegetation in some of the impacted areas, trampled and exposed river banks resulting in bank erosion and siltation. This will be corrected by excluding stock from the riparian corridor by means of appropriate seasonal fencing and a rotational grazing system, thereby allowing natural re-vegetation of the riparian corridor.

G.	What public benefits will be realized from this project?:
	Improved fish habitat and increased terrestrial food sources for fish populations should produce
	increased trout populations. Neither will wading anglers or those fishing from boats have to
	contend with cattle on the banks, standing in or crossing the river.
Н.	Will the project interfere with water or property rights of adjacent landowners? (explain):
	No.
1	Will the project result in the development of commercial recreational use on the site?: (explain):
	No.
J.	In this project appointed with the regionstian of most mining activity.
J.	Is this project associated with the reclamation of past mining activity?:
1	No.
	proved project sponsor must enter into a written agreement with the Department specifying d duration of the project.
IV. AU	THORIZING STATEMENT
101	e) hereby declare that the information and all statements to this application are true, complete, and
	urate to the best of my (our) knowledge and that the project or activity complies with rules of the
	ure Fisheries Improvement Program.
Applicant	Signature: Date: 5/24/12
7)	
Sponsor	(if applicable):
*Highligh	ted boxes will automatically expand.
Mail To:	Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
	Habitat Protection Bureau
	PO Box 200701
	Helena. MT 59620-0701

Incomplete or late applications will be returned to applicant.

Applications may be rejected if this form is modified.

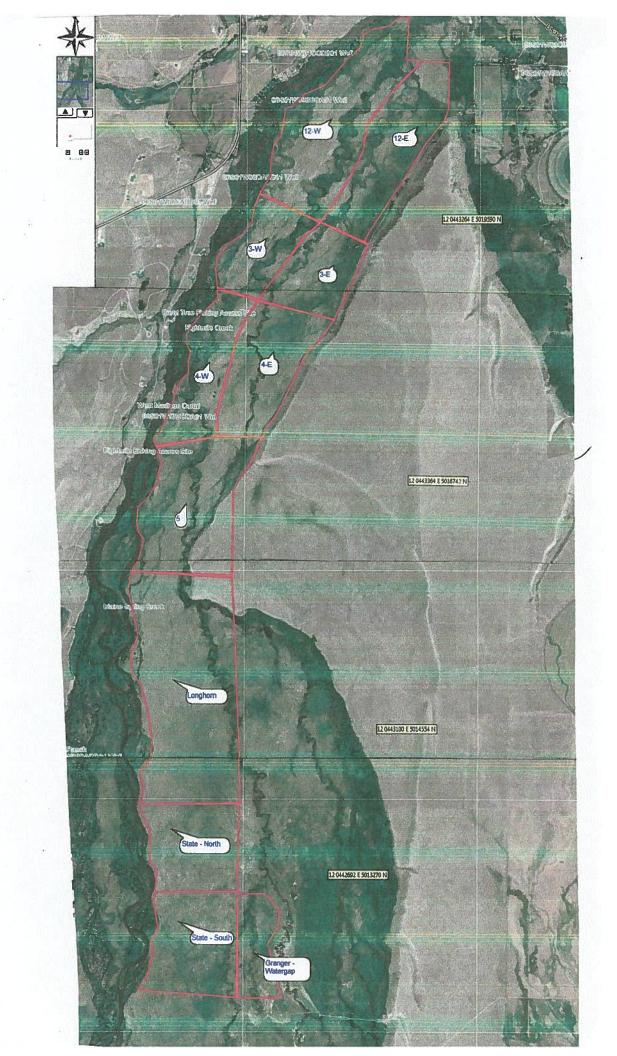
## BUDGET TEMPLATE SHEET FOR FUTURE FISHERIES PROGRAM APPLICATIONS (Revised 5/24/2012)

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# BUDGET TEMPLATE SHEET FOR FUTURE FISHERIES PROGRAM APPLICATIONS (Revised 5/24/2012)

### MATCHING CONTRIBUTIONS

CONTRIBUTOR	IN-KIND SERVICE	IN-KIND CASH	TOTAL
Madison River Foundation Volunteers	\$ 1,200.00	₩	₩.
Granger Ranch staff hours	\$1,200.00	49	49
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	€9	<b>€</b>	<b>49</b>
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Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Habitat Protection Bureau PO Box 200701 Helena, MT 59620

Monday, May 14, 2012

To Whom it May Concern,

The following letter is written in support of The Madison River Foundation's Madison River riparian fencing project. In its first 2 years this project has successfully protected and enhanced miles of the Madison River, reduced conflict between the recreating public and cattle and improved river bottom habitat through a managed grazing plan designed to better distribute livestock. As a result of this effort, cattle grazing is now a positive rather than a liability in working toward the goal of healthy riparian areas along the Madison and healthy sustainable agriculture in The Madison Valley. The latter is an important objective for sustainable ranching which is an important component in protecting the Madison Valley's open spaces, wildlife habitat, culture and economy. Additionally I can think of no better example of a project with relatively low costs that has brought people and community together to work toward common mutually beneficial goals. Volunteers from The Madison River Foundation that have helped with this fencing project have learned about ranching and we have learned more about the community we are part of. This project has created a tremendous amount of goodwill across the board and set an example of collaboration and success that could be easily replicated in other places with similar good results.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey A. Laszlo Granger Ranches

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